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APPENDIX OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) Covering for a surface, comprising a number of successive panels (2) on the one hand, and of fixing means (3) therefor on the other hand, said fixing means comprising holders (4) including fixing parts (10-11-12-13), said fixing parts arranged to engage and retain the panels (2) in a disconnectable manner over a part of the thickness of the panels (2).

2. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) are mounted in rows, and in that the panels (2), after they have been mounted, can be separated from their respective holders and removed without interference with the panels (2) which are located in the adjacent rows on either side.

3. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) are each provided with at least two fixing parts (10-11-12-13) made in one piece with the holders, and which are arranged so as to co-operate with two edges or portions of one and the same panel (2) respectively, for example with the opposite edges (6-7) thereof, or with portions situated in the vicinity thereof.

4. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) comprise separate elements which can be fixed on a base, whereby each holder (4) cooperates with a respective single panel (2).

5. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) comprise elements which can be fixed on a base, and wherein each holder (4) includes fixing devices (3) which are arranged to co-operate with several panels (2) situated next to one another.

6. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) are each provided with two fixing parts (12-10) which are arranged to co-operate with the edges or with portions situated near the edges respectively, of two adjacent panels (2).

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7. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, including a spacer and wherein said holders (4) co-operate with said spacer, for example a profile (55) upon or onto which the panels are mounted.

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8. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein each holder (4) includes a stopping part (23) with which said holder (4) can be positioned against a part of the covering (1) which has already been installed, either against a holder (4) thereof, or against a panel (2) thereof.

9. (Amended) Covering according to claim 8, wherein the stopping part (23) is formed of a protruding lip which functions as a spacer.

10. (Amended) Covering according to claim 8, wherein the holder (4) has a design, on the side where the stopping part (23) is situated on the one hand, and on the opposite side thereof on the other hand, such that when several of said holders (4) are mounted one after the other, the stopping part (23) of the one holder (4) can be freely brought up against the edge (6) of the panel (2) which is being held by the other holder (4).

11. (Amended) Covering according to claim 10, wherein every holder (4) concerned is provided with at least one stopping part (23) on one edge, and is provided, opposite every stopping part (23), with a portion which leaves the edge (6) of a clamped-in panel (2) free.

12. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) include clamping devices (31) which are arranged so as to enable the holders to be snapped-in on an underlying structure.

13. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein each holder (4) includes fixing parts (10-11-12-13) which co-operate with the panels (2) and, at least on one side, every fixing part (10-11 or 12-13) has features which facilitate a smooth,

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lateral, flexible bending, so that in a direction perpendicular to the surface of the covering (1) a firm interlocking is enabled.

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14. (Amended) Covering according to claim 13, wherein said fixing parts (10-11 or 12-13) comprise elastically bendable lips which are shaped by bending each lip backward out of the plane of the holder (4), and then forward again.

15. (Amended) Covering according to claim 14, wherein each of the holders (4) is equipped with a combination of one or several fixing parts (12-13) on the one hand which are formed of elastically bendable lips which are shaped by bending each lip backward out of the plane of the holder (4) and then forward again to further form a hook-shaped part (17), and of one or more fixing parts (10-11) on the other hand which are equipped with a relatively rigid hook-shaped part (15), and wherein at least one of the fixing parts (10-11 or 12-13) also has an inclined guiding part (16).

16. (Amended) Covering according to claim 14 wherein the elastically bendable lips which are bent backward out of the plane of the holder (4) and then forward again, comprise two parts (28-29) respectively, and in that the second part (29) is made such that, in a state of rest when no panel (2) has been provided in it yet, is pressed against the other part (28-51) with a certain force (F), such that the position of the lower end of the second part (29), and thus of the hook-shaped part (17) formed there, is always fixed.

17. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) overlap each other at their adjacent edges (6-7).

18. (Amended) Covering according to claim 17, wherein the panels (2) include overlapping parts (25-26) on the opposite edges (6-7), whereby, when mounted, a first part (26) of one panel (2) is located behind a second part (25) of an adjacent panel (2), and wherein a recess or free portion (27) is provided on the second part (25), such that the one panel (2) can always be freely rotated outward along the first part (26).

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19. (Amended) Covering according to claim 17, wherein the panels (2) may be meshed together at their adjacent edges, but nevertheless may still be laterally shifted when mounted, against the spring force of one or several fixing parts (10-11-12-13) provided on each respective holder (4), and wherein the meshing is such that a single panel (2) can be removed from between the adjacent panels (2) by shifting the panel and by subsequently rotating the panel.

20. (Amended) Covering according to claim 19, wherein each respective fixing part (10-11) includes a guiding part (16) arranged so that the panels (2), when being pressed in, are shifted laterally to be subsequently shifted back when mounted, whereby said guiding part (16) ensures that the respective meshing parts first pass one another to subsequently mesh one after the other as a result of the shifting back.

21. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) include gripping means (41) which provide a tight grip when said holder (4) is secured on a base.

22. (Amended) Covering according to claim 21, wherein said gripping means (41) comprises points of support (44-45) which are located on either side of a fixing point (42) and which are made such that the holder (4) is slightly bent when being secured, so that the holder (4) is tightened against the base on said points of support (44-45) when secured on the base.

23. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) each include only one fastener fixing point (42).

24. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) include positioning means (46).

25. (Amended) Covering according to claim 24, wherein the positioning means (46) comprises a supporting surface (47), enabling the holder (4) to be

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laterally pressed against a base, said supporting surface (47) comprising an L-shaped seating together with the bottom side of the holder (4).

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26. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) and/or the fixing parts are provided with bevelled and/or rounded-off edges (49-50) which facilitate the turning in and out of the panels (2).

27. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) each comprise at least two pairs of fixing parts (10-11-12-13) per panel (2) to be held, said pairs situated on either side of a stopping part (23) located in the middle of the holder.

28. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein each holder (4) comprises only one pair of fixing parts per panel (2) to be held.

29. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) mesh on their edges (6-7) by means of a tongue and groove joint, either directly or by means of an inserted element such as a strip (37).

30. (Amended) Covering according to claim 29, wherein the fixing means (3), as well as the tongue and groove joint, enable the panels (2) to be rotated along the side of the tongue (35) during assembly and disassembly of the panels and holders.

31. (Amended) Covering according to claim 30, including fixing parts (10-11-12-13) and wherein said fixing parts are located along the side of the tongue (35), said fixing parts corresponding to the fixing parts defined in claim 13.

32. (Amended) Covering according to claim 29, wherein the fixing means (3), as well as the above-mentioned tongue and groove joint, enable the panels (2) to be rotated along the side of the groove (36) during the assembly and disassembly of the panels and holders.

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33. (Amended) Covering according to claim 32, including fixing parts (10-11-12-13), and wherein the fixing parts are located along the side of the groove (36) said fixing parts corresponding to the fixing parts defined in claim 13.

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34. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) co-operate indirectly at their edges (6-7) by means of inserted elements, for example strips (37).

35. (Amended) Covering according to claim 34, wherein said elements are connected to one panel (2) such that they always occupy a specific lateral position.

36. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) include coupling parts in the shape of a tongue (35) and a groove (36), and in that at least one of these coupling parts is located outside a respective fixing part (10-11, 12-13) when mounted.

37. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) are provided with parts fitting one after the other, and in that the part which is situated on one longitudinal edge of the panels (2), extends up to the vicinity of the fixing part (12) of a following panel (2) to be mounted.

38. (Amended) Covering according to claim 37, wherein said part extends to underneath said fixing part (12) and/or up to a distance (D4) past this fixing part (12).

39. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) consist of laths.

40. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) include connecting devices on their crosscut sides.

41. (Amended) Covering according to claim 40, wherein the connecting devices provide for an interlocking, both in a direction which is at right angles to the

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surface of the covering (1) and in a direction which is parallel to the surface of the covering (1).

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42. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the panels (2) have a massive core.

43. Covering according to claim 42, wherein the panels are made from a material selected from the group consisting of wood and a product having a wood base, including MDF or HDF.

44. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein the holders (4) include fixing parts (10-11 or 12-13) on one side which are formed of a rigid, hook-shaped part (15 or 17).

45. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, wherein two or more panels (2) are connected at their crosscut ends by means of an accessory (61), comprising a body (62) and bent edges (63-64) formed on said body (62) which co-operate with the edges of the panels (2).

46. (Amended) Covering according to claim 1, said covering comprising a floor covering, said holders (4) comprising strips, and said fixing means (3) are formed of fixing parts (10-12) protruding from the surface of said strips.

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49. (Amended) Method for installing a covering formed of panels (2) which are provided with a tongue (35) and a groove (36) respectively on at least two opposite edges (5-6) which function as a unit when assembled, comprising mounting holders (4) with fixing parts (10-11-12-13) which can work in conjunction with said panels (2), and then hooking each panel in a respective holder (4) with one panel edge and then rotating the panel into the plane of the covering (1) so that not only are the panels (2) fixed between the fixing parts of the holders (4), but also said tongue (35) and groove (36) are coupled together.

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50. (Amended) Method according to claim 49, including the step of shifting the panels (2) with their edge which is provided with the groove (36) over the tongue (35) of a previously installed panel (2), or vice versa, said interlocking part of the holder (4) being laterally bent, so that a hooking-in is achieved on the opposite interlocking part.

51. (Amended) Method for disassembling a covering installed according to claim 50, comprising reversing the steps recited in claim 50.

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APPENDIX OF MARKED-UP AMENDED CLAIMS

1. Covering[, in particular a floor, ceiling or wall covering, characterised in that it at least consists of] for a surface, comprising a number of successive panels (2) on the one hand, and of fixing means (3) therefor on the other hand, [which] said fixing means [comprise] comprising holders (4) [which, by means of] including fixing parts (10-11-12-13), said fixing parts arranged to engage and retain the panels (2) in a disconnectable manner over a part of the thickness of the panels (2).

2. Covering according to claim 1, [characterised in that] wherein the panels (2) are mounted in rows, and in that [these] the panels (2), after they have been mounted, can be separated from their respective holders and removed[, at least irrespective of] without interference with the panels (2) which are [situated] located in the adjacent rows on either side.

3. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) are each provided with at least two fixing parts (10-11-12-13) made in one piece with [them] the holders, and which [can] are arranged so as to co-operate with two edges or portions of one and the same panel (2) respectively, [in particular] for example with the opposite edges (6-7) thereof, or with portions situated in the vicinity thereof.

4. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [consist of] comprise separate elements which can be fixed on a base, whereby each holder (4) [can mainly] cooperates with [one] a respective single panel (2).

5. Covering according to [claim 1, 2 or 3, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [consist of] comprise elements which can be fixed on a base, [whereby] and wherein each holder (4) [contains] includes fixing [means] devices (3) which [can] are arranged to co-operate with several panels (2) situated next to one another.

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6. Covering according to [claim 1 or 2, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) are each provided with two fixing parts (12-10) which [can] are arranged to co-operate with the edges or with portions situated near the edges respectively, of two adjacent panels (2).

7. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the above-mentioned] claim 1, including a spacer and wherein said holders (4) co-operate with [a] said spacer, [in particular] for example a profile (55) upon or onto which [they] the panels are mounted.

8. Covering according to [any of claims 1 to 6, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein each holder (4) [concerned is provided with] includes a stopping part (23) with which said holder (4) can be positioned against a part of the covering (1) which has already been installed, either against a holder (4) thereof, or against a panel (2) thereof.

9. Covering according to claim 8, [characterised in that] wherein the stopping part (23) is formed of a protruding lip which functions as a spacer.

10. Covering according to [claim 8 or 9, characterised in that] claim 8, wherein the holder (4) has a design, on the side where the stopping part (23) is situated on the one hand, and on the opposite side thereof on the other hand, such that when several of said holders (4) are mounted one after the other, the stopping part (23) of the one holder (4) can be freely brought up against the edge (6) of the panel (2) which is being held by the other holder (4).

11. Covering according to claim 10, [characterised in that] wherein every holder (4) concerned is provided with at least one stopping part (23) on one edge, and is provided, opposite every stopping part (23), with a portion which leaves the edge (6) of a clamped-in panel (2) free, [in particular in the shape of a recess (24)].

12. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [are provided with] include clamping [means] devices (31) [with which they can] which are arranged so as to enable the holders to be snapped-in on an underlying structure.

13. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that the] claim 1, wherein each holder (4) [is provided with] includes fixing parts (10-11-12-13) which co-operate with the panels (2) and [in that], at least on one side, every fixing part (10-11 or 12-13) has features which [allow for] facilitate a smooth, lateral, flexible bending, [whereas] so that in a direction perpendicular to the surface of the covering (1) [is offered] a firm interlocking is enabled.

14. Covering according to claim 13, [characterised in that the above - mentioned provisions are formed of] wherein said fixing parts (10-11 or 12-13) [which consist of] comprise elastically bendable lips which are [bent] shaped by bending each lip backward out of the plane of the holder (4), and then forward again.

15. Covering according to claim 14, [characterised in that] wherein each of the holders (4) [are] is equipped with a combination of one or several fixing parts (12-13) on the one hand which are formed of elastically bendable lips which are [bent] shaped by bending each lip backward out of the plane of the holder (4) and then forward again to further form a hook-shaped part (17), and of one or more fixing parts (10-11) on the other hand which are equipped with a [rather] relatively rigid hook-shaped part (15), [whereby] and wherein at least one of the fixing parts (10-11 or 12-13) also has an inclined guiding part (16).

16. Covering according to claim 14 [or 15, characterised in that] wherein the elastically bendable lips which are bent backward out of the plane of the holder (4) [or such,] and then forward again, [to this end consist of] comprise two parts (28-29) respectively, and in that the second part (29) is made such that, in a state of rest[, i.e.] when no panel (2) has been provided in it yet, is pressed against the other part (28-51) with a certain force (F), such that the position of the lower end of the

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20. Covering according to claim 19, [characterised in that every] wherein each respective fixing part (10-11) [concerned is provided with] includes a guiding part (16) [which makes sure] arranged so that the panels (2), when being pressed in, are shifted laterally to be subsequently shifted back when mounted, whereby said guiding part (16) ensures that the respective meshing parts [concerned] first pass one another to subsequently mesh one after the other as a result of the shifting back.

21. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [are equipped with] include gripping means (41) which [ensure] provide a tight grip [while] when said holder (4) is [being applied] secured on a base.

22. Covering according to claim 21, [characterised in that the above-mentioned] wherein said gripping means (41) [consist of] comprises points of support (44-45) which are [situated] located on either side of a fixing point (42) and which are made such that the holder (4)[, in particular its body (9),] is slightly bent when being [mounted] secured, so that the holder (4) is tightened against the base on said points of support (44-45) when secured on the base.

23. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [are] each [equipped with] include only one fastener fixing point (42)[, in particular one opening (14) to apply a nail (43), a screw or such].

24. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [are equipped with] include positioning means (46) [which simplify a positioning in relation to the base].

25. Covering according to claim 24, [characterised in that] wherein the positioning means (46) [consist of] comprises a supporting surface (47), [with which] enabling the holder (4) [can] to be laterally pressed against a [lath (5) or such of the] base, [which] said supporting surface (47) [preferably forms] comprising an L-shaped seating together with the bottom side of the holder (4).

26. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) and/or the fixing parts are provided with bevelled and/or rounded-off edges (49-50) which [simplify] facilitate the turning in and out of [such a panel] the panels (2).

27. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) each comprise at least two pairs of fixing parts (10-11-12-13) per panel (2) to be held, [whereby these] said pairs [are] situated on either side of a stopping part (23) [situated] located in the middle of the holder.

28. Covering according to [any of claims 1 to 26, characterised in that every] claim 1, wherein each holder (4) [concerned] comprises only one pair of fixing parts per panel (2) to be held.

29. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) mesh on their edges (6-7) by means of a tongue and groove joint, either directly or by means of an inserted element such as a strip (37).

30. Covering according to claim 29, [characterised in that] wherein the fixing means (3), as well as the [above-mentioned] tongue and groove joint, enable the panels (2) to be rotated along the side of the tongue (35) during [the] assembly and disassembly of the panels and holders.

31. Covering according to claim 30, [characterised in that it is equipped with provisions as defined in the preceding claims 13 or 14,] including fixing parts (10-11-12-13) and [in that the above-mentioned provisions] wherein said fixing parts are [situated] located along the side of the tongue (35), said fixing parts corresponding to the fixing parts defined in claim 13.

32. Covering according to claim 29, [characterised in that] wherein the fixing means (3), as well as the above-mentioned tongue and groove joint, enable the panels (2) to be rotated along the side of the groove (36) during the assembly and disassembly of the panels and holders.

33. Covering according to claim 32, [characterised in that it is equipped with provisions as defined in the preceding claims 13 or 14] including fixing parts (10-11-12-13), and [in that the above-mentioned provisions] wherein the fixing parts are [situated] located along the side of the groove (36) said fixing parts corresponding to the fixing parts defined in claim 13.

34. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) co-operate indirectly [on] at their edges (6-7) by means of inserted elements, [such as] for example strips (37)[or such].

35. Covering according to claim 34, [characterised in that the above-mentioned] wherein said elements[, in particular the above-mentioned strips (37)] are connected to one panel (2) such that they always occupy a specific lateral position.

36. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) [are provided with] include coupling parts[, in particular] in the shape of a tongue (35) and a groove (36), and in that at least one of these coupling parts is [situated] located outside [the accompanying fixing parts] a respective fixing part (10-11, 12-13) when mounted.

37. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims., characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) are provided with parts fitting one after the other, [in particular coupling parts, preferably in the shape of a tongue (35) and a groove (36),] and in that the part which is situated on one longitudinal edge of [these] the panels (2), extends up to the vicinity of the fixing part (12) of a following panel (2) to be mounted.

38. Covering according to claim 37, [characterised in that the above-mentioned] wherein said part extends to underneath [the above-mentioned] said fixing part (12) and/or up to a distance (D4) past this fixing part (12).

39. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) consist of laths.

40. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) [are provided with] include connecting [means] devices on their crosscut sides[, such as for example a tongue (39) and a groove (40) respectively].

41. Covering according to claim 40, [characterised in that] wherein the connecting [means] devices provide for an interlocking, both in a direction which is at right angles to the surface of the covering (1) and in a direction which is parallel to the surface of the covering (1).

42. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the panels (2) have a massive core.

43. Covering according to claim 42, [characterised in that] wherein the panels [consist of] are made from a material selected from the group consisting of wood [or] and a product [on the basis of wood] having a wood base, [in particular] including MDF[,] or HDF [or such].

44. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein the holders (4) [are provided with] include fixing parts (10-11 or 12-13) on one side which are formed of a rigid, hook-shaped part (15 or 17).

45. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that] claim 1, wherein two or more panels (2) are connected at their crosscut ends by means of an accessory (61), [consisting of] comprising a body (62) and bent edges (63-64) formed on said body (62) which co-operate with the edges of the panels (2).

46. Covering according to [any of the preceding claims, characterised in that it is realised as] claim 1, said covering comprising a floor covering, [whereby the] said holders (4) [consist of] comprising strips, [whereby the] and said fixing means (3) are formed of fixing parts (10-12) protruding from the surface of [these] said strips.

49. Method for installing a covering [according to any of claims 1 to 46, characterised in that use is made of] formed of panels (2) which are provided with a tongue (35) and a groove (36) respectively on at least two opposite edges (5-6) which [can work in conjunction] function as a unit when assembled, [whereby the method mainly consists in that holders (4) are first mounted] comprising mounting holders (4) with fixing parts (10-11-12-13) which can work in conjunction with [the above-mentioned] said panels (2), [in particular holders (4) as described in any of claims 1 to 46, and in that the panels (2) are] and then [provided in the holders] hooking each panel in a respective holder (4) [by first hooking them in] with one panel edge and [by] then rotating [them] the panel into the plane of the covering (1) [to be realised, whereby] so that not only are the panels (2) [are] fixed between the fixing parts of the [above-mentioned] holders (4), but also said [the abovementioned] tongue (35) and groove (36) are coupled together.

50. Method according to claim 49, [characterised in that] including the step of shifting the panels (2) [are shifted] with their edge which is provided with the groove (36) over the tongue (35) of [the preceding] a previously installed panel (2), or vice versa, [whereas the accompanying] said interlocking part of the holder (4) [is] being laterally bent, [such] so that a hooking-in is [realised] achieved on the opposite interlocking part.

51. Method for disassembling a covering installed according to [any of claims 1 to 46, characterised in that one proceeds in the opposite sense of claim 49 or 50] claim 50, comprising reversing the steps recited in claim 50.